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HELIOTROPE

REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER

For the Library.

for

the Author

John Rothmann

St. Louis Jan 15. 1908.

HELIOTROPE

A BOOK

OF VERSE



—BY—

JOHN ROTHENSTEINER

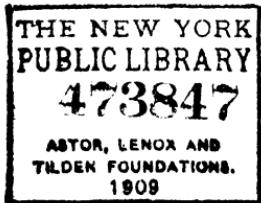


ST. LOUIS, MO.

B. HERDER

1908.





DEDICATION.

*A simple sprig of Heliotrope,
For childlike hearts and true,
My artless rhymes of faith and hope
I dedicate to you.*

Gift of the author, 17. Jan. 1918

I.

Songs and Poems.

A Voice Came

A voice came through the hush of night
From out the eternal day:
I am the lamp of heavenly light
To guide thee on thy way.
Take hope once more, be true and strong
In thought and word and deed:
Come sing thy happy matin song,
And follow where I lead.

Fear not the serpent's poisoned fang,
Heed not the lion's roar.
I bore for thee death's bitter pang,
That thou shouldst fear no more.
Look forward: nor to left nor right
Let wandering footsteps stray.
The hours rush on in ceaseless flight
Unto the eternal day.

I am the lamp to lead thee on
Through pain and weariness.
I am the orient light of dawn
To cheer thy heart and bless,
Companion of thy lonely way
Gilding the fringe of night,
At last to fill thine endless day
With glory and delight.

—o—

O Steadfast Soul!

O steadfast soul that loves the Lord,
Thy life how full of joy!
Ever with Him in sweet accord
It knows no ill's alloy.

Thy work and weariness are blessed,
And all thy human cares;
Thy sleep is an untroubled rest
Beneath God's golden stairs.

Thy conscience is as free from gloom,
As thy unclouded brow;
The eagle in his mountain home
Is not as free as thou.

No man can rob thee of thy wealth,
Thy treasure is above:
For goods are dross, and fame and health,
And there abides but love.

And love is thine, and sweet accord
With joy and blissful rest.
O steadfast soul that serves the Lord,
How happy thou and blest.

—o—

A Lyric of Life

Our life here is bounded
By boundlessness:
Impelled and rounded
By hope and distress.

Bewildered in sorrow
We yearn for delight,
And ever "Tomorrow,"
We sigh in the night.

But groping forever
For pleasure and peace,
In restless endeavor
We gain our release.

And when we awake of
The dream of distress,
We soar to partake of
Life's boundlessness.

—o—

Holy Mother Church

O Mother, full of truth and grace.
God's miracle of love,
Still bearing in Thy sad sweet face
A glory from above.

The gentle Savior's bride Thou art
All holy, undefiled;
And, Mother dear, with happy heart
I count myself Thy child.

For Thee I live my lonely life,
Knowing but Thee and Thine;
In weary cares and ceaseless strife
Thy hopes and longings mine.

Earth's glitter, let it fade in night;
Earth's darkness, let it frown;
Thy children's joy my sole delight,
Thy glory be my crown!

—o—

Holy Spirit, Living Light

Holy Spirit, Living Light,
Hovering o'er the darksome night,
Come, my trembling fears allay;
Drive the mocking shades away:
Let my soul resplendent shine
With that beauteous Light of Thine.

Spirit of eternal Love,
Sovereign of the realms above,
God of gentleness and might
Fill my heart with love's delight.
Make it gentle, kind and still,
Make it strong to do Thy will.

Spirit, Fount of Holiness,
Come in tongues of fire to bless,
Rousing cold and languid hearts,
Kindling them with lambent darts:
Come in glory and inspire
All with zeal and rapt desire.

Holy Spirit, bless and cheer
Wearied wandering children here.
Still allaying hate and strife,
Lead us to the Fount of Life.
Grant us Peace, Thou gentle Dove,
Sovereign Grace of Light and Love.



Come, O Come, Thou Gift Transcending

Come, O come, Thou Gift transcending
Every gift, Essential Love,
Pledge of life and joy unending,
Come, O Spirit from above,
Guide me on the path of duty,
Still the passions' fretful strife;
Fill with goodness, light and beauty
All the secret springs of life.

Paraclete from Heav'n descending,
Thou hast made Thyself mine own;
Yet my sin, Thy Love offending,
Made me homeless, sad and lone.
Look upon me poor and stricken
Full of dread and sudden fears:
Come, Creator Spirit, quicken
Thou the fountain of sweet tears.

Touch me but with living fire,
Heal my wounds with burning smart;
Banish sin and sin's desire
From the threshold of my heart.
See my soul in homage bending
Opens wide th' expectant door.
Come, with sevenfold gift descending
Make me Thine forevermore.

—o—

The Bells of Christmas

What say the bells of *Christmas-night*?
From heaven is come the Light of Light;
The Son of God a babe is born
To be the world's Emmanuel,
The conqueror of sin and hell
Awaits you on this blessed morn.

What say the bells of *Christmas-morn*?
In every heart let Christ be born;
The angels sang their solemn lay
To every humble heart and chaste:
O pilgrims of the earth, make haste,
Let Christ be born in you today.

What say the bells of *Christmas-day*?
We saw eternal Wisdom play
Before the Lord as Light of Light
Begotten from eternity:
And He of cloudless majesty
Was born to us on *Christmas-night*.

—o—

St. Michael, Archangel

Thou brightest of the morning stars
 That hailed the dawn of our creation;
 Great captain in the dreadful wars
 That threatened all with desolation:
 O Michael, strong through love divine,
 Steadfast beneath the fiery showers,
 All hail, the victory is thine
 O'er Lucifer's embattled powers.

For "who is like to God," thy cry
 Resounds throughout the realms of heaven;
 And from their battlements on high
 Dark angels fall as thunder-riven;
 Spirits regardless of their bliss,
 Too proud to bow in adoration,
 Rush headlong down to hell's abyss,
 In utter fright and desolation.

And joyful shouts, as flashed thy sword,
 From all the ranks of spirits Elysian;
 And then the glory of the Lord
 Came like a sunburst on thy vision.
 Thou victor, Prince of Paradise,
 Their beauty crowns thine own with splendor:
 O great and holy, good and wise,
 Strong arm of God, and our defender.

Companion of our pilgrimage
 Through earth's alarms and tribulations,
 O keep alive from age to age
 Man's hopes, resolves and aspirations.
 O give us strength, our cross to bear;
 Give solace in our bitter weeping;
 And may the darksome spirits ne'er
 Mislead our souls from thy sweet keeping.

—o—

The Heaven of Dreams

Between the sunset and dawn
Lies darkling the heaven of dreams,
Where all the lost joys live on
Enfolded in starry beams.

Like children with angel wings
They move through the mystic deep,
As memory croons and sings
The heart of sorrow to sleep.

And peace and quiet fills
Like waving incense the night,
And all the valleys and hills
Are fresh with life's delight.

Too bright for the glare of the day,
Too sweet for the world's dank air,
All lovely as newborn May,
And sweet as its roses, and fair.

Between the sunset and dawn
Lies radiant with memory's gleams,
The home of the joys that are gone,
The heaven of happy dreams.



Child-Song

Where do you go, you little stars,
When the day first opens his eye?
O, does the sweet lady of the dawn
Just put you to sleep in the sky?

And does she bless you weary of play,
Charming away all care;
And does she fold your little hands
And help you along in your prayer?

And does she smooth the pillow for you,
And kiss you gently good-night,
And draw the curtain, lest you might see
How she dazzles the world with light?

And do you ever awake and stare,
And being afraid, do you weep?
And does your mother come in the dark
And sing you once more to sleep?

And do you ever, the babies, I mean,
Fall out of your little bed?
And does she heal and quiet the pain,
Patting each golden head?

Ah, yes, little stars, I know where you go,
When the day first opens his eye.
Your beautiful mother, the lady of dawn,
Just lays you to sleep in the sky.



May - Dawn

The violet eyes of springtide glance,
From out the leaves of yester year:
And crystal waters laugh and dance
Adown the hill in mad career.

Deep hidden in her leafy bower
The mockingbird sings loud and long;
And hark, from Heaven what golden shower,
A meadow-lark's exultant song.

The greenwood throbs with life's delight,
The grass grows lush beneath my feet;
Deep the blue dome and wondrous bright,
And all the earth how fair and sweet!

And all the springs of life rejoice,
As earth and sky in joyance kiss:
Yet everywhere a faint low voice
Reminds me of a deeper bliss.

Far lovelier still the spring must be
That greets the saints of God above.
More ravishing the melody
That thrills their hearts with joy and love.

Sweet rest and peace forevermore,
Oblivious of Time's ceaseless flight:
Earth's joy seems but the brimming o'er
Of Heaven's great cup of deep delight.

—o—

In the Heart of the Ozark Hills

I am dreaming of home, and my spirit sings:
I am dreaming, dreaming of home:
As the south wind sweeps on fluttering wings
O'er murmurous miles of foam.

The earth is drear by the northern sea,
And the sky is chill and dun:
I know where the hillside dreams of me
In the smiling land of the sun.

I know where the mocking-bird's falling-song
The orchard with rapture fills;
Where the peach-trees bloom the rail-fence along
In the heart of the Ozark hills.

I know what the children sing in the dell,
I know of their happy play,
I listen afar to the evening bell
That sweetly calls them to pray.

I am dreaming of home, where heaven's blue deep
A golden splendor fills:
I am dreaming of home, and my spirit will sleep
In the heart of the Ozark hills.



Song of the Missouri River

Weary as if with endless toil
The mighty river drags along
Its tawny waters, coil on coil,
To one deep mystic song:
The haunting song, all comfortless,
Of its but half-remembered doom;
The slumber song of loneliness
In the vast prairie's gloom.

Far, far in yonder glowing West
Its childhood glanced o'er golden sands,
Where the primeval pine forest
In solemn grandeur stands.
And lo! a sudden leap of joy;
The waters heaved and swelled with pride:
The forest monarch but a toy
Dancing upon the tide.

But rushing river, all too soon
The reeling plain bows to thy will;
Melting into the glare of noon,
Wide, empty, lone, and still;
The changeless sun throughout the day,
The changeless stars of heaven at night
Through changeless solitudes away
Lead from thyself the flight.

And dragging still the weary length
Of one unending secret chain,
Blind with desire and captive strength
Thou singest as in pain:
The haunting song, all comfortless,
Of thy but half-remembered doom;
The spirit's utter loneliness
In the vast prairie's gloom.

—o—

The Color Bearer

The fight was lost, and on the plain
The lad among his comrades lay,
Fallen amid the leaden rain,
His life blood ebbing fast away,
The noon day hours creeping slow,
As if no care they knew; and then
The parching pain of thirst, and Oh,
The cries and groans of dying men!

Up rattled the enemies' ambulance:
"Quick with the stretcher, take that boy!"
"Please, Sir, take those that have a chance;
I'm dying and I go with joy,
Take up my comrades first," he said,
And tears stood in his breaking eyes—
When they returned they found him dead:
So bury the laddie where he lies.

And as they took him from the ground,
They knew his secret of content:
Folded beneath his corpse, they found
The colors of his regiment.
Torn from the staff and stained with gore
The symbol of his country's pride;
The flag his hands in battle bore,
He kept untarnished till he died.

—o—

The Rescued Miner

A roar as of the crack of doom,
And then the silence of the dead:
Alone within the ghastliest tomb,
Pinned down upon a hard rock bed;
And darkness as of blackest night;
At last I realized it all:
Forever gone the day's sweet light,
Buried alive beyond recall.

I felt a weight upon my feet,
My arms alone and head were free:
And still my pulsing life how sweet
In the black deep eternity!
I cried aloud for help: and then
I listened long in fluttering fright
And heard the groans of dying men
From out the impenetrable night.

As dead I felt among the dead:
And yet I knew I was alive.
I touched the boulders o'er my head
And knew how vain it was to strive.
Out of the depths my heart uprose:
O God, my only Hope and Light,
Give courage Thou and strength to those,
That seek to save me, God of Might!

I must have slept: for O, the dreams
That haunted me to make me rave!
I woke, to hear the shattered beams
Creaking above my cavern grave.
But succor came: I know not when,
A sound, as of a burrowing rat
Came nearer from above and then
A gentle tapping: rat, tat, tat.

It was a signal. Then and there
I felt that life was doubly dear.
A sudden rush of fresh cool air,
And now a human voice so near:
"Cheer up, we're coming; are you hurt?"
"No! no!" I yelled, "but almost dead."
And then I felt a sudden spurt
Of water just beyond my head.

And loud I laughed to hear my name:....
A gas pipe sank, to where I lay,
Just in the nick of time it came,
Bringing of light one half-lost ray,
And never can my heart forget,
How good its first sweet cooling draught,
How sweet the words it downward sped,
As in my grave I cried and laughed.

Full fifteen days: it seemed to me
One dark immeasurable space,
Where slumber-calm eternity
Held heart and sense in rapt embrace.
I struggled half and half gave way:
And prayed for freedom and the light:
And then, at last, the blessed day
Broke through the crumbling walls of night.

And O, how sweet to drink my fill
Of God's own air and light again!
No words can give the poignant thrill;
The sudden joy was one with pain.
And still my heart in gladness starts:
"Deep reverent thanks, O God, to Thee,
Bless Thou the noble miners' hearts
For all their love has done for me!"

The Two Angels

When night, the cheerless night of sin and death,
Had spread its pall o'er Eden's happy bowers,
God's fugitives came forth with bated breath;

And sunbright one of Heaven's high-ruling Powers
Waved high his sword against each wistful glance
Eve backward cast amid repentant showers.

Then night grew denser: souls, as in a trance,
Yearned for the truth, and could not find its light;
Yearned for the good, and felt it slip their hands.

Still through the hideous darkness of the night,
When love gave place to lust, and joy to gloom,
The angel's flaming sword waved quick and bright.

And doubt and fear stood at the open tomb:
Yet hope could never die in human breast,
That God would save the world from dreadful doom.

Prophetic visions of a kingdom blest,
Stole radiant through the rifts of darkest cloud,
With sweetest promise of eternal rest.

When suddenly a voice came deep and loud:
"Do penance: for redemption now is near,
Take hope, ye lowly: bend your neck, ye proud."

And lo, with blessed words of hope and cheer
Love's angel stood at heaven's half-open gate,
Closing the long sad centuries of fear;

Not splendid as of old in royal state,
But glorious with the hidden wealth of grace,
That first great angel's counterpart and mate.

He called the weary from their devious ways
To Christ the Lord, and then on heaven-ward wing
Unveiled the glory of the coming days.

And ever after, as the praises ring
Of saints and heroes, sweeter sounds his name
Melodious from the lips of Christ the King:

The Baptist John. But, as the Savior came
With grace and healing dropping from His hands
Upon the erring, poor and sick and lame;

Uncovering deep secrets with a glance,
Recalling from oblivious sleep the dead,
Awakening men from sin's delirious trance;

“Behold the Lamb of God!” Christ's angel said,
And sweetly vanished, like the morning star,
When first the sunlight veils the sky in red.

Then suddenly as lightning flashed afar
The glory of the Lord: and sin and death
Fled with the night; and o'er the shattered bar
God's fugitives returned with quickened breath.



Christmas Roses *

It was a vision of the night,
And yet not all a dream:
My soul was filled with sudden light,
As with a rushing stream.
And now, behold, a starlit plain
With tangled thorns o'ergrown:
And over all one dying strain,
Life's mournful monotone:

“O wilderness of woe and sin!”
The thorny branches sighed,
When lo, a lovely babe within
The thicket I descried.
A little, helpless, winsome child,
With eager arms outspread;
With lovelit eyes, from undefiled
Deep springs of beauty fed.

Its sweetness filled my heart with glee;
Yet still the wonder grew,
For well I knew what mystery
Lay hidden there from view:
The splendor of the Father's face,
A flower with petals furled;
A babe of tender love and grace,
Whose hands uphold the world.

* Set to music for Barytone or Mezzo-soprano by the Rev. Charles Becker,
Professor at the Salesianum, Milwaukee, Wis.

“O poor,” I cried, “and feeble found,
Bereft of majesty,
With bitter thorns encompassed ’round,
Would I could come to thee!
Dear babe, to fold thee to my heart,
Thou mine, and I but thine,
And never, nevermore to part,
What blessedness were mine!”

At once there spread a winning smile
Over the dimpled face;
Bathing the very thorns awhile
In loveliness and grace.
And oh, that smile, it seemed to say:
“Touch but the thorns and see!”
I touched the overhanging spray;
And lo, it danced with glee.

For roses sprang beneath my hand
The Holy One to bless;
And sweetly waved the thorny land,
A spring-tide wilderness.
And heaven’s joy-bells rang and rang;
And from their orient hill:
“Glory to God,” the angels sang,
“And peace to men, good will.”

In childlike way my happy heart
Kept singing merrily:
Of all my life the crown thou art;
“What shall I give to thee?
Thou sweet white rose of innocence,
All fragrant from above,
Behold the red rose penitence,
The golden rose of love!”

Then spoke the child; "Of all thine own,
Give but the thorns to me,
That I may bear what thou hast sown,
And suffer still for thee:
But give thy brethren what on me
Thy bounty would bestow;
The soul of life is charity,
The hearts all-quicken^g glow."—

'Twas but a vision of delight,
Yet more than any dream,
The thorny pathway through the night
Still brightens with its gleam.
The Christ-child dwells among us still,
Though hidden for a while;
And roses wait the kindly will,
The gentle word and smile.

—o—

'Twas Their Ascension Day

A LEGEND OF THE CONVENT OF SANTAREN.

Ye gray old cloisters, breathing all the peace
And rapt devotion of an happier age,
Tell me the legend of that far off day
When Jesus came from Mary's arms to fare
With Fra Bernardo's little novices!

Mere children they, Benito and Leon,
In the white habit of Saint Dominic,
And day by day from neighboring homes they came
To hear instruction from Bernardo's lips.
They loved their master dearly and, fulfilled
Of love and duty, still in age they grew
And wisdom's lore and grace with God and men.

Upon these flags they played one morn in May,
And stopping at the casement there, they looked
Upon the streamlet wandering through the plain;
And ever onward went their wistful eyes,
Up yonder hillside's olive circled crest
Until they rested on the horizon's marge,
Where earth and heaven seemed to melt in one.
"Ah, were we there we might walk in, Leon!"—
Benito said, with outstretched longing arms,
When suddenly rang out the noon-day bell,
Calling to prayer the men on plain and hill;—

As eagles on the wing they stopped 'midplay
And said their Ave's with sweet childish lips
In praise of Mary Mother and her son.
"Go fetch the basket," said the child Leon,
And then they came, as they were wont to do,
To yonder chapel of the Virgin-Queen
With the dear Infant Jesus in her arms.
Saluting first our Lady and the child
The frugal meal Benito spread upon
The altar steps, two little jugs of milk,
Some figs and wheaten bread: and now they ate.

But deep in holy thought, Benito said:
"Would that our Savior came to eat with us
As once he did at Emmaus long ago."
And suddenly, all bubbling o'er with joy,
The little innocent Leon exclaimed:
"Come down, dear Jesus, come and eat with us!"
And merrily he clapped his little hands.
But Jesus smiled and sprang from Mary's lap,
And gliding downward on a wave of light,
He joined the children at their spare repast.
Familiarly He talked with them; and they
With Him familiar grew, as innocent hearts
Find natural all supernatural things.

Thus Jesus came and went, their playfellow
For three sweet days: But men would not believe
The happy children's word, and laughing said:
"A legend Fra Bernardo told so oft,
That they believe it true, or haply too
A boyish trick to get a fuller store."
And others jested: "Now the Holy Child,
Should soon invite you to His Father's house."—

It was the third day since the heavenly guest
Had graced the children's hospitable board,
And once again He came and sat and ate,
And all were merry, when Leon exclaimed:
"When wilt Thou ask us to Thy Father's house,
Dear Holy Child?"—"Hush, hush, Benito cried,
Forgive him Jesus; he is but a child."—
But Jesus smiled on both and gently said:
"Your wish shall be fulfilled. But three days hence
There will be feasting in my Father's house,
And you, my playfellows, shall feast with Me;
Farewell, farewell, until Ascension day!"—

With sudden joy transported, off they ran
To tell good Fra Bernardo of their bliss:
"The Holy Child came down from Mary's lap
To eat with us, and now within three days
He promised we should feast with Him in heaven."

And Fra Bernardo heard and was convinced:
"Go," said he, "dearest children, go and tell
The Holy Child, the convent rule forbids,
That novices without their master go
To any banquet, and then beg the Lord,
That He invite Bernardo too; now go!"

And quick they ran, and stood before the shrine:
"Dear Holy Child, the convent rule forbids,
That novices without their master go
To any banquet; so we beg of Thee,
Invite our dearest Fra Bernardo too!"
And Jesus smiled and sweetly nodded: "Yes."

Three days passed on, the blest Rogation days,
Three days of anxious waiting: then the sun
Rose as the symbol of the ascending Christ:
But Fra Bernardo went to say his mass
Beneath the image of our Heavenly Queen
With the dear Holy Child upon her lap.
And on the very steps where Christ the Lord
Had eaten with them, now the children knelt
In rapt devotion and in joyous hope.
Christ came to them from Fra Bernardo's hand
In sweet communion of the sacrament,
And then the Father and his novices
Knelt down in prayer on the altar steps,
And silence fell upon the happy three,
The silence of eternity.

But when

The shades of evening glanced along the plain,
The brethren missed Bernardo, and they called
His name, and sought him long; until at last
They found him kneeling as in silent prayer
Between Benito and the child Leon,
Lifeless all three upon the altar steps.
Their eyes and folded hands were turned to heaven
In holy joy, as hearkening to the strains
Of far-off music: 'twas their Ascension day.



In Memory of L. H.

EIGHT YEARS OLD

When violets decked the grassy slopes,
And fragrance dropped from cloudless skies,
Thy spirit full of joyous hopes
First saw the world with glad surprise.
Eight years have flown, and still thy life
Seemed but a springtide holiday;
Far, far away, the storm and strife,
And duty seemed but sweeter play.

So fondly nestled in the arms
Of father's care and mother's love,
Hedged in by all that cheers and warms,
And rich with blessings from above;
And yet, though sweetly bloomed thy cheek,
Thine eyes were filled as with a dream,
And wistfully they seemed to seek
A far-off light's elusive gleam.

“Dead! dead!” the bitter tear drops say,
Where grief and moaning vigil keep:
But ah! for thee 'tis rest from play;
And death came like a placid sleep;
The golden curtains backward drawn
Showed all the heavens in azure hue;
But fairer than the morning dawn,
A vision burst upon thy view.

Thy violets no longer bloom,
Where drear December moans and sighs;
And darkling in the gathering gloom
We miss the radiance of thine eyes;
O gently good and loving kind,
So like an angel from above,
All pure of soul and bright of mind,
Thou little heart of golden love.

—o—

In Memoriam

Between the dawn of maidenhood
And happy childhood's haunting dream
The little one expectant stood
And saw the bright years glance and gleam.

And heard the joybells call and call;
But turned aside her sparkling eyes,
And brought her life, beloved of all,
To Christ a spotless sacrifice.

We loved her for her gentle ways,
And welling tear-drops cloud the sight,
As dreaming of the vanished days
We see her face all pure and bright.

But ah! no more her feet shall roam,
No more where dole and sorrow dwell,
And yearning for her blissful home,
Our hearts now sigh a fond farewell.

—o—

An Old Stamp Collection

Dear little book, with proud array
Of postage stamps on faded leaves,
The glory of my boyhood's May,
A mystic charm around thee weaves;
Long years ago, in the golden prime,
Thy treasures found this humble home;
Come, wake to-night a gladsome chime,
As through thy lone demesnes I roam.

That flabby three-cent envelope,
Still fragrant with a secret joy,
Once carried words of love and hope
From a mother's heart to her homesick boy.
Ah, first dear letter I received,
So tender, cheerful, true and mild!
I clean forgot that I had grieved,
As from its page my mother smiled.

And now some fifty more recall
Bright incidents, or grave or gay;
Again I see the study hall
And many a darkling leafy way;
Once more I walk with you, dear friends,
Along the lake's low murmuring shore,
And as the veil of night descends,
I hear the college bell once more.

And many a dear familiar face
Obedient to its wondrous spell,
Appears to-night in youthful grace
As in the days when all was well.
There's Harry with his twinkling eye,
And pensive Gus and gentle Pete,
And ponderous Joe and Ed the sly—
All, all with joyous heart I greet.

The vision brightens as I gaze
Upon each form at happy play,
Whose golden hearts and winsome ways
Love's glamor shed upon my May.
Now silent in the moonlight's gleam
And flitting by on spirit wings,
They wake my heart from its lovely dream
Of hope and rapt imaginings.

Oh, that the sad, sweet dream might last,
The memories of my golden May!
But through the dim vistas of the past
The vision fades away, away,
The midnight stillness fills the room;
And so, dear tattered book, good night!
For once amid the encircling gloom
Thou wert a talisman of light.

—o—

New Year's Greeting of the Parting Year.

I must be gone: but ere I pass
To let the happy New Year in,
Come see reflected in my glass
What now you wish that you had been.

Upright of heart, in speech sincere,
Loving whatever things are true,
Glad to be right, without a fear
The world's reproach might rest on you.

Your honor is your jewel: keep
Its lustre free from blot and stain;
Let not your angel-guardian weep
To see you led in captive chain.

The path of duty opens wide:
Full many a deed of kindness
Awaits your hand on every side
To help and cheer, to soothe and bless.

High, generous thoughts and pure desires,
The love of what is good and great,
Behold the ever living fires
That must consume and recreate:

Consume what is of earthly dross,
And recreate the heart in pain.
The Master says: Take up your cross,
And learn that sorrow is your gain.

The world may steal your golden hoard,
Yet leave your soul more rich in love:
For life is but the outer court
Of our predestined home above.

Away fond hopes and idle fears:
'Tis earnest work alone can win:
So strive to be in coming years,
What now you wish that you had been.

—o—

The Bibliophile

"Who peruses black-letter romance?"
ANDREW LANG

Peruse my books! No, no, I love my friends
Too dearly, Sir, for such ignoble use.
They are my life's delight; and fondly still
I treasure them within the gilded shrine,
To gaze upon them with approving eye,
And show them to my visitors, and dwell
Upon their age and rarity and price,
Their costly bindings, rich in blazonry,
And silver clasps wrought with divinest art.
And whilst I touch their sides with loving hand,
I seem to breathe the air of long ago,
When Chaucer and his pilgrim crew were young,
When all the world was brimful of romance,
And books themselves were but the flower of life.
And still I hold them as the flowers of love.
But read them! no, the very thought is pain.
Let lazy schoolboy con his blubbered page,
Let bleareyed student drowse o'er shabby tome,
Let restless pedagogue with sniffing nose
Cut through from page to page his book-worm path,
Yet I will love my books, and never read
Save title-page and colophon: I am
A true old friend of books, a bibliophile.

—o—

"We Teach the Branches All"

We teach so sweetly, that the world may learn
The sum of knowledge with the least exertion.
And that which caused the midnight oil to burn
Is now a summer-holiday diversion.
And lustily the young ideas shoot:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

We give a Latin course of seven weeks,
In Cæsar, Virgil, Cicero and Sallust;
We teach the wit and wisdom of the Greeks,
All that's worth knowing, and without the ballast,
Of varied scholarship the choicest fruit:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

The modern languages delight still more:
Italian, French, and Portuguese, and Spanish,
A thimbleful of all, and then a score
Of Teuton dialects, Dutch, Swedish, Danish:
Old Anglo-Saxon and new Jimplecute:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

Whilst then Philology entrances thee,
The Mathematics, too, demand attention:
Geometry and Trigonometry,
With angle, cosine, tangent, fourth dimension,
We square the circle, as the chutes we shoot:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

And then Philosophy, the heaven-born muse,
Delights to lead thee through her flowering garden,
Most learnedly discoursing on the hues
Of rainbows and of other beaux, beg pardon!
And why the moon shines, and the meteors shoot:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

Mythology, the ancient gods of Greece,
And Rome and Hindostan, and all that follow.
Comparative Religion, if you please,
On Brahma, Zarathustra, Buddh, Apollo!
The merest miss can learnedly dispute:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

We teach Astronomy and History,
Political Economy, Poetics,
Geo- Bio- Zoo- Psycho- logy
With Oratory, Botany, Phonetics,
And Organ, Pianini, Fiddle, Flute:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

This is the age of push and go-ahead,
We are the broadest, most progressive nation;
And yet, the branches taught are mostly dead,
Before we've finished our education:
And then we wonder, why so small the fruit:
"We teach the branches all"—but not the root.

—o—

Selflove

Selflove to love is as the cheat
Among the wheat:
Upspringing from the selfsame root,
Differing in fruit.
Tear up in many a heart the cheat,
You leave no wheat,
As under love's deceitful show
Selflove doth grow.

—o—

He Interfered

Whilst for rain all men were praying
Mister Chump was heard to say:
Lord, don't hear them; I am haying,
And a rain would spoil my hay.

—o—

Subscription-Books

They take the primal elements
Of thirty famous scholars,
And write a book worth thirty cents,
To sell for thirty dollars.

—o—

*Go Forth **

Go forth, dear Messenger of hope and love,
Knock at the gate of every Christian home:
Go forth with joy! Rich blessings from above
Be with thee still where'er thy feet may roam.

The world is cold and selfish: Never fear!
Among its thorny thickets thou wilt find
Sweet flowers of devotion, pure and dear,
Truehearted women, men of generous mind.

And many a family's sweet garden-close
From storm and strife, I know, will shelter thee:
And then: "A story tell me!" says the Rose;
The Violet murmurs: "Sing a song for me!"

* Written for the first number of the "Christian Family" of Techny, Ill.

The Lily lifts her pure transfigured face:
"Tell me a legend of the saints of God!"
"A sweet sad tale, I want, of love and grace,
To make me cry!" lisps the Forgetmenot.

The little Larkspur crows: "Some funny thing!"
And still he laughs: and still I hear him call . . .
And ever loving, ever comforting,
I hear thee speak and laugh and sing with all.

But life is earnest, and thy message is
An earnest call to holiness and love.
Ravishing glimpses of the heavenly bliss,
And inspirations of the Eternal Dove,

And many a healing word for sorrows-balm,
And many a thought to break the gathering gloom,
And many an influence, cheering, bright and calm,
Go out with thee to make God's garden bloom.

Go forth with God, and win both heart and mind,
Let Christ the Savior be thy model still,
Loving the children and to all most kind,
That all may learn to love and keep His will.

—o—

II.

Sonnets.

DEDICATION

To the People of Old St. Michael's:

*Full twenty years together we have kept
The path that leads through life's well-varied scene:
In ceaseless round the earth grew fresh and green,
And bore its fruitage, and in beauty slept.*

*And many a time the heart of sorrow wept
To see fond prospects lose their golden sheen:
With eyes uplifted still and hope serene
We found God's solace, and our troth we kept.*

*And as your children grew in age and grace,
It was my joy to watch their growth with you,
And closer thus they bound our hearts together.*

*O ever faithful, loving, kind and true,
Accept these whisperings of the vanished days,
My Friends, my People, from your love's deep debtor.*

Approaching Venice

O Venice, Venice, can my heart forget,
What thou hast been to me so many a year,
Since first the story broke upon my ear
Of thy great empire, now forever set?

A strange charmed city in the foam and fret
Of sunlit Adriatic oft drew near
To fill my dreams, and many a silent tear
Fell, as the phantom domes and towers fled.

And often have I longed, but dared not hope,
To see thy glories with my waking eyes,
And breathe the air still fragrant of thy past:

Tomorrow I shall see the warder ope
The gate that leads to all thy mysteries,
And all thy beauty shall be mine at last.

—o—

Venice

A marble city founded in the sea:
Within her streets the waters ebb and flow,
Dark gondolas forever come and go,
And earth and sky are wrapped in mystery.

Her strange vicissitudes of history
Grand palaces in varied beauty show,
San Marco's walls in pictured splendor glow,
As in the days, San Marco's queen was free.

A royal city: once three kingdoms stood
Obedient to her will; in peace or war
Her might was dreaded by earth's mightiest ones.

That day is past: in pensive widowhood
She sits and dreams beside the harbor bar
Of all her dead but unforgotten sons.

—o—

Venice the Beautiful

Like to a lotus-flower, fold in fold,
 Thou liest dreaming 'mid the flowing tide,
 Oblivious of the years that gently glide
 And touch but lightly thy soft gray and gold.

The heart of genius called thee forth of old;
 A people's love made thee blue Adria's bride,
 Thy haunting beauty evermore the guide
 Of doge and saint and sage and hero bold.

And south and east and west their galleys went,
 Now bent on traffic, now on deadly strife,
 Yet following forever beauty's gleam;

They brought the treasures of the orient
 To fill thee, Venice, with the joy of life,
 And leave thee as the vision of a dream.

—o—

The Faith of Venice

It was a people strong in faith divine,
 True Christian manhood's fair embodiment:
 And gladly of God's rarest gifts they spent
 To make His name with added lustre shine.

Bear witness thou, San Marco's lovely shrine,
 Where East and West in softest radiance blend;
 Della Salute, thy proud monument,
 Santa Maria Gloriosa thine.

Ye temples, John and Paul, the Redentore,
 The Scalzi, and Giorgio Maggiore,
 Bear witness to your people's olden days:

Not gold it was, but loving faith and duty,
 That dowered Venice with immortal beauty,
 And crowned her royal brow with deathless rays.

—o—

A Venetian Night

'Tis night on the canal, soft, southern night,
After a glorious autumn sunset glow:
O'er swelling waves the salt-sea breezes blow,
And half-enchanted time retards his flight.

Deep in the blue the stars are golden bright;
Softplash of oars, and laughter soft and low,
As o'er the waves like glittering serpents go
The gondolas of youth and life's delight.

A very fairyland of tranquil peace:
Sweet sounds of lutes, and strumming of guitars,
And now a sudden burst of joyous song.

Youth's revelry beneath the silent stars
Amid Venetia's sacred memories,
So sweet it was, it almost seemed a wrong.

—o—

The Venice of the Poets

This is the city of the poet's heart:
For beauty is the queen of both: to-day
I heard a harper on the rock-bound quay,
Singing what well we knew through Shakespeare's art.

And there they were: the everbusy mart,
The bridge that Portia knew and Jessica,
The very palace with its casements gray,
As once they filled with joy the poet's heart.

City of sighs and dreams, a dream thou art
Of beauty almost one with poignant pain,
Mirage abiding of the changeful sea.

Undying city of the saddened heart,
Thy loss itself of empire was thy gain:
For sorrow binds the great world's heart to thee.

—o—

Florence

Dear city of our Lady's mystic flower,
 Florence, the pride of Arno's verdant plain,
 Flowering in Brunelleschi's marble fane,
 And in the lily-buds of Giotto's tower.

Long gone thy sovereignty's imperial dower,
 When Guelf and Ghibbelin were wont to stain
 The streets with blood, or lead in captive train
 The dauntless victims of thy shifting power.

Of noble heart thy sons, so fierce in strife:
 Still loving thee, and proud of manhood's right,
 Intense as in their loves, they were in hate:

And deep their sin, but ever in the night,
 Undying faith new kindled grace and life,
 That, battling with strong passions, made them great.

—o—

The Greatness of Florence

Great Empress of the arts; supreme in song,
 And painting, sculpture, architecture: lo,
 Thy fourfold artist Michael Angelo
 Leads to thy throne thy children's laurelled throng.

Dante, the vision-haunted, strides along,
 Da Vinci of the Savior's sunset glow,
 Rapt Donatello, grave Verrocchio,
 And Giotto mild, and Brunelleschi strong.

Cellini, now uproarious, now sedate,
 Giovanni, whom the angels loved, and he
 That formed of bronze the gates of paradise:

Each one alone would stamp a nation great;
 Yet all of these and more were born of thee,
 Fair city of the name that never dies.

—o—

La Bella Napoli

No spot on earth can be compared to thee
In varied charm of nature's offerings:
Of thee the exile's heart forever sings,
Earth's paradise, O bella Napoli.

Soft blue the sky, and blue the summer sea:
To cliff and scar the vine and olive clings,
And o'er the scene his lurid splendor flings
Vesuvius, thy lord of destiny.

Sweet harmony of warring elements;
As roses round the cup, thy shores along
White towns and villas of romance and story:

An endless holiday of dance and song,
The richest banquet for the dreamy sense,
Illumined by the summer's waning glory.

—o—

Mount Vesuvius

At first it seemed a garden of the blest
High up the mountain's gently sloping side,
At last scorched rocks, and desolation wide,
And secret tremblings of a vague unrest.

But through the night, behold the giant's crest
With fiery halo crowned and glorified,
As glowing streams of lava downward glide
To fold with blood-red stole his heaving breast.

O scene sublime, incomparably weird,
The fierce old warrior of so many a fray
Above the swarming multitude of men!

Sublime, O faith, that bids the people stay
Among the scenes by memory endeared
Like children playing round the lion's den.

—o—

Pompeii

A city of the dead without a tomb,
 Brought from far ages to the light of day;
 Still fresh the paintings, eloquent and gay,
 Of all the roofless walls of hall and room.

Northward I see the great destroyer loom,
 Breathing defiance on my lonely way
 Through narrow, silent streets and ruins gray,
 Where life ran riot once and met its doom.

Charred olives, figs, and bread of long dead years,
 Bodies of men and women molded all
 In very gesture of their dying breath.

The silent temples, and dumb theatres,
 And every pillar, portico, and wall
 Proclaim the immortality of death.

—o—

The Blue Grotto of Capri

Steep from the sea upsprings the frowning cliff,
 Dark, massive, cold, into the azure dome,
 And fresh the wafting comes of salt-sea foam,
 As to the grotto's gateway speeds the skiff.

And in we dart: a tranquil world, as if
 Our boat hung bird-like o'er the mermaid's home:
 Instead of glancing wings the fishes roam,
 And silver stars hang twinkling on each cliff.

And liquid silver drops from oar and hand,
 And silvery light streams upward through the blue
 Into the azure mystery around.

And silver shells and coral deck the sand,
 The monsters of the deep come plain in view,
 Our muffledplash of oars the only sound.

—o—

Virgil's Tomb

From out the laurel shade of Virgil's tomb
The eyes go wandering o'er the sunny land,
Where storm-tossed came and sore the Dardan band,
To rest from toil 'mid nature's riotous bloom.

And o'er the field of smoke and deadly fume,
Where every hill then shook a flaming brand,
The Sybil led their leader by the hand
Deep through the caverns of eternal gloom.

How grand the scene and solemn! Far away
The horizon rests upon the enchanted isles,
That made a living harp of Virgil's soul:

And sweetly as in gladness nature smiles
Upon the silvery billows of the bay,
Still rhythmic with the Aeneid's swell and roll.

—o—

At Ostia

They stood alone beside the darkling sea,
Saint Monica and her highsoaring son,
Watching the stars emerging one by one
From the far depths of blest eternity:

And faint and sweet a voice of mystery
Spoke to her longing heart: Thy course is run,
Thy prayers all answered, and thy crown is won,
And now the Lord will set thy spirit free.

Then turned she to her son as in a trance,
But spoke no word: yet wondrous secracies
Were brightly mirrored in her loving glance:

A joy beyond all earthly sound and sight,
Beyond the happiest dreams and images,
Eternal life's ineffable delight.

—o—

Christian Rome

Great center of the world, eternal Rome,
 The Christian faith's perennial fountain-spring,
 Where God's all-quickening Dove on silent wing
 Hovers above the grand star-circled dome.

City where all the faithful nations come
 To bow in reverence to their shepherd-king,
 And where the erring turn from wayfaring
 To find at last their soul's sweet peace and home.

A mother's arm seems gently laid on all;
 A face long loved and sought now makes them start
 And own with joy and pride thy gentle sway.

For, ever as the nations rise and fall,
 Thine is the empire of the mind and heart,
 And never can thy glory pass away.

—o—

The Roman Forum

This was the heart of ancient Rome: this street
 Of deep-grooved paving, was the Sacred Way,
 O'er which the legions dashed upon their prey,
 And home-returning, marched with rhythmic beat.

A field of fragments now the imperial seat,
 Triumphal arches mouldering away;
 Each ruined temple and basilica
 The pensive solitary's deep retreat.

The vast foundations of the Palatine
 Frown from their heights; and graceful columns stand
 Memorials of long dead divinities:

Wild roses everywhere, and laurel green
 O'erhang the desert pathway of the grand
 Majestic pageant of the centuries.

—o—

The Coliseum

Fit monument of man's high-vaulting pride,
Colossal ruin of Rome's ancient day,
Yet grand and venerable in decay,
As if by dearest memories glorified.

Three tiers of proud arcades go sweeping wide
In one vast towering circle, scarred and gray,
Where once the Roman kept high holiday,
And laughed to see how anguished creatures died.

Alone I walked the endless galleries,
As o'er the walls the moonlight rippled down,
And the arena seemed a silvery sea:

Deep shadowy forms there moved with palm and crown;
And well I knew amid the solemn peace
The battlefield of Christ's great victory.

—o—

The Catacombs

Here in the cavern's night and silent gloom,
Among the graves of martyred friends there came
The remnant once still loyal to His name,
Who died to save them from unending doom.

These wandering passages, that pillared room
Sheltered their feasts of love from wrath and shame
Three long dark ages, when the sacred flame
Seemed but a funeral lamp within a tomb.

In secret here they stood to chant the praise
Of Heaven's great King, and offer sacrifice
In yearning hope of brighter, happier days.

When suddenly, as Christ but spoke: Arise!
The buried church came forth in heavenly rays,
And all the world bowed low in glad surprise.

—o—

The Bernese Alps

Ye mountains proud of everlasting snow,
 Rising from verdant slopes of grain and wine;
 High home of arrowy Rhone and golden Rhine
 That singing here through echoing gorges flow.

Grand in the sunlight, grander still, when slow
 As gently mourning for sweet day's decline,
 Your swelling sides and peaks begin to shine
 With the red roses of an alpine glow.

High towers of silence, nature's mighty shrine,
 How deeply feels the heart its littleness
 Amid your vastness and magnificence.

And yet a nobler destiny is mine:
 To live, and love, and help and cheer and bless,
 Serving the Lord in child-like reverence.

—o—

The Minster of Strassburg

How grand the Minster's waves of harmony:
 The orient window's iridescent light,
 The sweep of columns lost in heavenward flight,
 The buoyant walls as yearning to be free.

The mystic soul of ancient Germany,
 Her deep strong faith, her love of truth and right,
 Her noble confidence in darkest night,
 Embodied soars in stone, O God, to Thee.

And blossoming beneath the graceful spire,
 Rich traceries of flower and leaf and vine
 Enfold her saints' and heroes' lovely throng:

Thus sweetest memories round the Minster twine;
 The myriad sculptures singing high and higher
 Of faith and hope and love the glorious song.

—o—

Old Towns in Germany

Ye quaint old towns by German streams and rills,
Where still the ghosts of former days survive;
So quiet, yet to every wind alive
That blows upon you from the purple hills.

Your restfulness the soul's wild longing stills:
Your every home a dreamy little hive
Where the first builder's children's children thrive,
As once he thrived amid life's joys and ills.

The well kept church, the center of your love,
The churchyard in the shadow of the spire,
With many a dear one's simple monument:

The old-world garden, and the hillside grove,
These are the roses of your heart's desire
Within the magic circle of content.

*The Abbey of Metten*

How bright the day to memory ever dear,
When 'mid thy hallowed scenes I felt how good
It was to dwell in blessed brotherhood
With hearts, as thine, great, loyal, and sincere:

Glad, kindly, cheerful, though of life austere,
In converse meek with nature's changeful mood,
And gathering in sylvan solitude
Rich harvests of the soul from year to year.

It was the mellow autumn: sweet and calm
The golden sunshine lay on all the scene,
And fresh as breath of morning came the air:

And bright the cloisters gleamed from out the green,
Fragrant of peace and hope and sorrow's balm,
And over all the spirit moved of prayer.



By the Blue Danube

And here the Nibelungen marched along
With iron clang to their impending doom.
Beyond the stream the towers of Bechlarn loom,
Where the last revels cheered the fated throng;

When Giselher without a thought of wrong,
Stood laughing into Hagen's face of gloom,
And Gunther smiled at life's elusive bloom,
Whilst Volker's heart poured forth its wealth of song:

Then sank the storm-cloud: lightnings shot athwart
The bloodstained pathway; hurtling lance and spear
Darkened the sky, as kings and heroes fell:

But truth and manhood knew no doubt or fear,
As Queen Kriemhild with hate-transfigured heart
Watched o'er the raging battle's surge and swell.

—o—

The Nibelungen-Lay.

A song there is of grand simplicity,
In noble numbers limpidly complete:
It opens with an idyl pure and sweet
Of maiden love and manly chivalry,

But soon it darkens into tragedy:
As love is turned to hate, the pulses beat
With quick fierce joy of slaughter; yet beneath
Courses a strain of faith and constancy.

A song melodious of the sword and lance,
Full of the memories of an older world.
Fresh of the springtide of an older day:

Of manly strength, yet childlike utterance,
An epic rose with petals half unfurled,
The grand true-hearted Nibelungen-Lay.

—o—

Tyrol

Land of the strong, where the avalanche's roar
 Voices the spirit of freedom's wild delight:
 Land where the sun enkindles on each height
 Hope's glorious altar-fires forevermore.

Land true and loyal to the heart's deep core,
 Of faith unshaken in the stormiest night;
 Impetuous as the mountain torrent's flight
 Down the deep channels its own freedom wore.

Land of my fathers, virtue's crown thou art,
 Of childlike trustfulness and manly power,
 Doing and suffering with unconquered soul:

Grant me thy loyalty's immortal dower,
 Thy hate of wrong, thy free and buoyant heart,
 O mountain-home of liberty, Tyrol.

—o—

The Song of Roland

Keen songsmith of the iron age, who made
 The deeds of Roland ring in rhythmic time,
 Whose stroke and counter-stroke of clanging rhyme
 Marked but the impact of each flashing blade.

How deep thy storm-enraptured music swayed
 The hearts of men in their heroic prime,
 As through the din of battle moved sublime
 The mighty Charles in warlike pomp arrayed.

But hark, what sounds! how sweet and sad they fall
 Upon the sense: 'tis the horn Olivant
 Bringing the unconquered warrior's dying breath:

And listen now, the melting mournful chant
 For Roland fallen in deep Ronceval,
 And Alda mourning for her hero's death.

—o—

Lourdes

How well the quiet beauty of the place
 Blends with the grandeur of the Pyrenees;
 And, haunted though by war's grim memories,
 How throbs the vale with benison and grace;

As if the Virgin of the radiant face
 Were bending down from heaven's bright secracies,
 Each saddened heart to fill with happy peace,
 And smooth on every brow each sorrow's trace.

O Maiden-Mother in the mountain-shrine,
 The sore afflicted wait thy healing hands,
 The sinners pray with heavy-laden soul;

Behold the pale wan yearning faces shine
 As with the brightness of thy countenance;
 O speak once more: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

—o—

La Sainte Chapelle in Paris

La Sainte Chapelle, most lovely little shrine,
 Built as the Crown of Thorns' fit resting place;
 Memorial of the Savior's day of days
 That made earth's pain and grief and shame divine.

The glamor of that mystery is thine:
 Thyself a deep-toned burst of orient rays,
 Where saints and angels with transfigured face
 Look through the trellis of thy flower and vine.

The high-flung arches seem to melt in air,
 The light is tremulous with expectancy,
 As of a miracle that cannot fail;

And almost audible the spirit of prayer
 Moves heart and soul with a vague mystery
 As of the presence of the Holy Grail.

—o—

Rural England

Half-hidden in the pleasant depths of June
 Lies rural England now, a dream of peace,
 Beneath the arching canopy of trees,
 Its true old heart with nature's self in tune.

From hawthorn coppice falls the stock-dove's croon,
 The hedges murmurous of the wings of bees,
 And sweetly mingling with the slumberous breeze
 Comes the calm garden-river's mystic rune.

Delightful prospects where in many a glade
 The stately deer in happy freedom range,
 And big-eyed does regard you unafraid:

'Tis all as if the Princess Poesy
 Enchanted lay in some deep-hidden grange
 Hushed into sleep by nature's lullaby.

—o—

Westminster Abbey

London, of all thy far-famed monuments
 I first would greet Westminster's glorious pile:
 But pensive sadness filled my heart, the while
 Mine eyes were charmed with its magnificence.

Not grand proportions, nor the haunting sense
 Of mystery in choir, and nave and aisle,
 Not all the grandeur could my heart beguile
 Amid the marks of vanished reverence.

Old home of England's ancient faith: and oh,
 Her lovely images in bronze and stone
 Recalled but that the beauteous soul is fled.

And sad I felt at heart and lone, as though
 I had come home and found my mother gone,
 And secret voices whispered: She is dead.

—o—

London

A wilderness of grimy brick and stone;
Long streets of mean tall houses: hurrying feet
Along dark shops, as marking with quick beat
The multitudinous life's monotonous drone.

And there the palace of the world's great throne,
New monuments, and fine old churches greet,
And many a little graveyard's green retreat,
And many a mansion, too, whose life is flown.

The sordid greed, the proud extravagance,
The endless pageant, fluttering and gay,
With all its music hushed, and beauty furled:

And high above the bustle of the day
Old London Tower's cluster of romance,
The silent specter of a long-dead world.

—o—

Home Again

I sang the glories of an alien strand,
And now I turn to thee, to thee at last,
My country of the prospects rich and vast,
My mother of the strong and generous hand.

What though their empires seem secure to stand,
And thy horizon be with clouds o'ercast,
Theirs is the past, the all-inspiring past,
But thine the future, O my native land.

Though fairer be the vales and hills and streams,
And lovelier far the myriad works of man,
And richer in undying memories:

Still dearer than the old world's happiest dreams,
The fresh rough valley seems where life began
Amid the rustling of primeval trees.

—o—

At the Manger of Bethlehem

Sweet Maiden Mother, bending o'er the child,
In radiant purity and breathless awe,
Smoothing with gentle stroke the manger's straw,
And soothing still with love the winter wild:

How beautiful thy Babe, O Mother mild;
How full of mystery the eyes, that saw
The glory of the Lord; how sweet the law
Of power and helplessness here reconciled.

Thine, all alone, the Son of God; no dreams
Made known thy happiness; the angel-throng
Calls but the shepherds from the lonely hill;

Far through the darkness see the flitting gleams
Of earthward wings: and hark, the jubilant song;
Glory to God on High, to men good will.

*St. John the Child*

'Tis sweet to think, Saint John the Baptist too
Was once a child, and played as children play
With frolic lamb the livelong happy day,
And after rest went gamboling anew:

'Tis sweet to think he ran and hid from view
Among the rosemary and thyme of May,
Mocking his playmate bleating all the way,
Fleet as the cloudlets in the tranquil blue.

And sweet to think, that one long day of days
Saint John had Jesus for his play-fellow,
Whilst with delight the face of nature smiled;

And that long after, when with sudden glow
The Savior spoke of children's innocent ways,
He praised them all, remembering John the child.



Beneath the Cross

How sad, how pitiful, Jerusalem,
 Thy fatal blindness and ungenerous pride!
 They dug his hands and feet, they pierced his side,
 Thou standing by in hateful league with them.

Thy Prophet He, the flood of vice to stem,
 Thy King, to rule the nations far and wide,
 Thy Priest forevermore, and lo, He died,
 And thou exulting, O Jerusalem.

Vanished thy earthly grandeur: hope no more
 To lord it o'er the nations with the sword:
 Thy walls are doomed, thy children sink with them:

Yet for the love the gentle Savior bore
 For thee and thine, thy form shall body forth
 The glories of His New Jerusalem.

*Easter Morning*

Exult ye princes of the realms of light,
 Lift up the gates with holiest blood impearled,
 Exult bright spirits of the lower world:
 The Lord of Life is risen in His might.

Behold His glory bursting on the sight,
 The sacred banner to the breeze unfurled,
 The prince of darkness from his throne is hurled
 Rushing to endless doom in precipitous fright.

The ancient curse is lifted from the heart,
 The shackles fall, and hope and joy return,
 As nature's self in sympathy rejoices:

And you alone, why sadly stand apart!
 Do you not feel the heart within you burn,
 Listening around you to sweet secret voices?



Great Thoughts

Great thoughts are flashlights of eternity
 Athwart the shadow-world of time: and where
 Dark mists and clouds in brooding silence stare,
 Part the far depths of heaven: and lo, we see.

And onward now we press, serene and free,
 Drawn by God's messenger, to do and dare
 And vanquish world and time, at length to share
 The joy of life and love, light's boundless sea.

Ah, one great thought, the world is all too poor
 To give it: Thou alone, O God, canst fill
 The yearning soul with light and make us free:

Blindly we grope, urged by our lawless will
 Or following where sin and passion lure:
 Grant us, to save us, one great thought of Thee!

*Three Mysteries*

Three mysteries there are of deepest light,
 Adored in silent awe of mind and sense;
 Of cloudless splendor, subtle, quick, intense,
 O'erpowering all as with the wings of night.

O Blessed Trinity, thou God of Might,
 And Wisdom and of Love's magnificence!
 O Son of God made man, Omnipotence
 Become a feeble child, man's sole delight!

And Thou who in Thy Father's bosom dwellest
 Eternally, and in the Virgin's womb
 Wert made incarnate by the Eternal Dove:

O mystic Presence in our exile's gloom,
 O living food, O sacred blood that wellest
 From glorious wounds, sweet Sacrament of Love!



Prayer for France

So bright, so fair, dear Mother Mary, hail!
 Ordained to be redemption's morning star,
 From glorious visions cast thine eyes afar
 Upon our sorrows in earth's gloomy vale.

An hour ere sunrise, and the stars grow pale;
 And froward doubt, and unbelief, and war
 Assail us darkling, and quick lightnings scar
 The stately watch-towers swaying in the gale.

Beam on the world, O star that brings the day;
 Disperse the shades and heal the bitter strife,
 Unweave the web deceitful night has spun;

Put forth thy power in thy gentle way,
 Let peace return, and hope and joy of life;
 Come, Mother Mary, lead us to thy son.

*Come Stay With Thy Children*

Hail Mother of the world's Emmanuel,
 Dear guardian of our Savior's early days,
 The children greet thee 'mid the flowery maze
 Of nature's joy and springtide's magic spell.

And countless hearts with holy rapture swell,
 To drink the radiance of thy beauteous face,
 And feel beneath thy blessed smile of grace
 Sweet happy childhood's trust, that all is well.

Yes, all is well, O Mother dear and blest:
 For thine the love that bends to all, and thine
 The power that sways the Throne of Love and Might:

Come, dearest Mother, be thy children's guest,
 And for the willing gift of earth's new wine
 Grant us the sweetness of thy love's delight.



St. Francis of Assisi

Great heart and true, signed with the seal of love,
 Saint Francis of the wounds of living fire,
 Moving the lowliest creatures to aspire
 With inspirations of the Eternal Dove;

In earthly garb an angel from above,
 How lightly on the wings of sweet desire
 Thy soul was wont to seek that central fire
 Which men call God, and God Himself calls love.

One thing I ask of thee, O dearest one
 Of all our Blessed Lady's heavenly throng,
 One thing, sweet Saint, to crown thy gifts to me:

Thy wisdom not, nor happy heart of song;
 Grant me the life of all that thou hast done,
 The secret of thy dauntless charity.

*St. Francis the Poet*

The Tuscan tongue a tangled brier grew
 Amid her ancient monument's decay:
 First came a fragrance of a far-off May
 Upon the breeze, then larks trilled from the blue:

And lo! in tattered garb of sombre hue
 God's Poverello walked along the way,
 And touched with gentlest hand the wilding spray,
 And kissed his brother thorn, and passed from view:

When suddenly the thorn-bush stood aflame,
 Kindling for very gladness rose on rose,
 The poet-garland of the Tuscan tongue:

And ever lovelier grew that garden-close,
 Still bright and fragrant with its one sweet name
 No poet ever knew and left unsung.



No More

No more the springtide steals upon my soul
 With the old mystic sense of brotherhood;
 The flowers no raptures wake, though glad and good
 Their coming seem after bleak winter's dole.

The world how changed since disappointment stole
 The exuberance of joy out of the blood;
 In vain the wildbirds call from field and wood,
 As dimmed by mists the waves of beauty roll.

Come once again, O spring of long dead years,
 When hope looked on the world with youthful eye,
 And saw its laughing image in the brook,

And sought its future in the deep blue sky,
 And felt its pulsebeats in the wind that shook
 From every flowering spray the dew of tears.

—o—

Christ Crucified

How selfish, thou my soul, how dead and cold,
 Seeing the love the Savior bore for thee!
 Behold His arms extended on the tree,
 To His love-wounded heart thine own to fold.

A crown of piercing thorns instead of gold
 He bears for thy proud lawless liberty:
 He longs for thee, He begs; O come to me;
 The ransom for thy forfeit crown behold!

Lift up, my soul, thine eyes from care and strife,
 And see His lifeblood trickling to the ground,
 Whose image lies defaced within the heart:

And thou, my Christ, sole hope of blissful life,
 Best friend and dearest that the soul e'er found,
 Teach her to love Thee, nevermore to part.

—o—

Human Life

Life's quivering mystery! a sudden light
 Flashing from out the illimitable dark:
 Of intellect a never dying spark
 Kindled from Him who rules both day and night:

Of fluttering love a half unconscious flight,
 Singing and soaring as a heaven-bent lark
 Above earth's weariness and care and cark,
 To find in boundless Love its true delight.

Soul, intellect and love, life's trinity,
 Made for the visions of far brighter spheres,
 Fashioned for joys the earth can never know:

As if the eye of God were bright with tears
 Of His creative love and sympathy
 Showing His Essence in reflected glow.

—o—

Repentance

Thy wounds are burning through the dead of night,
 O Lord, my Lord, what shall become of me?
 I dare not lift my sullied eyes to Thee,
 I cannot veil them from the awful sight.

My heart is fluttering as a bird with fright:
 For still Thy burning wounds' dread mystery
 Threatens in anger, and I cannot flee,
 For darkness holds me captive to the light.

O burning wounds, light up the Christ's dear face:
 Show me the mercy known and loved so well,
 Ere sin o'er cast my soul with restless fear:

Flame not so dreadfully: no strength or grace
 Remain within me; but the harrowing knell
 Sounds endless doom: Lord Jesus, hear, O hear!

—o—

My Lady Truth

I heard them vaunting, and I knew they spoke
 In scorn of her I love with all my heart:
 And she I love and honor, saw me start,
 Ready to give them angry stroke for stroke.

But unseen lips the pent-up silence broke:
 Love them for my sake, though they stand apart.
 Thou canst not know the secrets of the heart,
 What souls shall come to love that now provoke.

Leave all to God and bear the scorn with me,
 Though hard it seem for flesh and blood to still
 The angry billows of a storm-tossed sea:

Love but and serve me with a purer will,
 As patiently I wait and hopefully
 Their home-coming upon my sun-bright hill.

—o—

The Ruins of Ninive

And this was Ninive, these mounds of clay
 Were once the palaces of mighty kings,
 These bulls and lions with the sculptured wings,
 Her symbols were of proud imperial sway.

This wide-flung desert then in beauty lay
 A pleasure bright with silver brooks and springs;
 And still the earth with fierce affection clings
 To the memorials of the dawn of day.

Proud, valiant, fierce, and drunk with all delight,
 A thousand years the blood-stained city stood,
 The dread and wonder of the world of old:

Then flashed the wrath of God: and gathering night
 O'erwhelmed the lioness and all her brood,
 As silently the centuries onward rolled.

—o—

Hope

I am alone; and night is gathering fast
 Around my pathway through the wintry wood:
 The leafless trees in solemn silence brood,
 And sullen looms the sky with clouds o'ercast.

Darkness above, darkness around, one vast
 Retreat of weariness and solitude.
 Yet hopefully I walk in happy mood;
 And there it shines, the light of home, at last.

The world is dark and cold: my foot is sore,
 And chilled my heart: yet from an inward glow
 Sweet secret gleams of hope and joyance come:

For lovingly in heaven's bright hall, I know,
 My Father waits for me, and evermore
 My Mother trims the lamp that guides me home.

*At the Old Home*

Once more I came within thy walls to pray,
 Once more to hearken to sweet words of cheer,
 Home of my happier days, forever dear,
 Forever fragrant as the bloom of May.

In mellow sunlight all the prospect lay
 Enfolded in thy purple hills, and clear
 Deep eyes from hedge and thicket seemed to peer,
 The hopes and fears of many a vanished day.

In pensive mood I walked from mound to mound
 Of the dear dead my memory holds enshrined,
 Treading with reverent feet thy holiest ground:

And sad I parted, lingering to the last,
 As if my better self remained behind,
 And I were but the shadow of the past.



Hardscrabble

They call the place Hardscrabble: rough and hard
 The life they lead upon its rock-strewn soil,
 Where the upheaving element's turmoil
 Left bare the ribs of earth, all bleak and scarred:

But nature bound the wounds with emerald sward,
 And smoothed the scars with rain and sunny smile;
 And patient hands began to moil and toil,
 Until the desert bloomed for their reward.

Hardscrabble, yes; and still far off the day,
 When its rough hills will be the happy scene
 Of orchards, vineyards and rich golden grain:

But come it must: nothing is all in vain,
 That springs from courage and from hope serene;
 God's blessing rests on those that toil and pray.

—o—

They Say

They say, ah yes, they say: but what they say
 Is mostly mean and bitter and untrue;
 Yet brothers are content, and sisters too,
 Their neighbor's fame with this dark word to slay:

“Now, have you heard the latest, by the way,
 They say, poor fellow, he will get his due;
 And poor Miss Debonaire will quickly rue
 The secret she so long concealed, they say.”

And so they say: but who, my friend, are they,
 That say such spiteful things, and dare not face
 The victims of their sharp and poisoned lip?

I see them circling as in breathless chase,
 Hissing forevermore: “they say, they say,”
 Whilst their ringmaster Satan cracks his whip.

—o—

Legends

Spurn not the legends gathered by the way
From sainted graves of memory, fresh and dear,
As daisies bright with dewdrops, each a tear,
Reflecting but of broken light a ray.

Spurn not the legends: let their happy play
Illume the rugged pathway, and austere.

'Tis when the sun grows dark they cease to cheer,
Not light themselves, but beauteous of the day.

The truth is one in all its myriad rays;
And God the heart of truth, when childlike art
In colors rare its heavenly glory paints:

Seek thou the truth in all its sunbright ways;
But never spurn the fresh and joyous heart
That sees deep truth in legends of the saints.

—o—

Longfellow

Sweet singer of our native birds and flowers,
Of happy homes in valley and on plain,
Of mirth and laughter in the greenwood lane,
And merry sound of bells from distant towers.

The gleams and glances of the fleeting hours,
Sighs, tears, and yearnings, and an exile's pain,
Faith, love, and duty, too, and endless gain
Melodious come as gentle summer showers.

Delighted ever with thy varied lore,
The heart in joy and sorrow turns to thee,
Feeling the thrill as of a master's hand:

Not of the greatest, but beloved the more
For thy sweet gentleness and purity,
O dearest poet of our native land.

—o—

Charles Lamb

Sad was his fate: a cloud of sorrow hung
 With dire portent above his gentle head:
 A deep, dark tragedy, that filled with dread
 A sister's heart to which he fondly clung.

But still he joked and laughed with stuttering tongue
 In the bright intervals, when fancy led
 To musty stalls by folios tenanted,
 Keeping his spirit ever blithe and young.

Quaint, blue old china, rare and ragged books
 Unsealed within his soul the fount of tears,
 Transmuting all to fancies rare and quaint:

And sweeter than low laughter of the brooks
 His rippling speech comes thro' the gathering years
 With music of a sorrow far and faint.

*In Memory of John Keats*

An ivy-leaf from Adonais' tomb:
 Long withered, yet instinct with silent grief,
 Memorial of a song-flight all too brief
 Among antique strange flowers and trees in bloom:

Born of his dust who sang Hyperion's doom,
 And held the old world of romance in fief;
 Who heard soft music in its plaint of grief,
 And caught a gleam of brightness in its gloom.

Last night my ivy-leaf unheeded fell
 From its sweet bower where still night's tawny-throat
 Sings rapturous, whilst waving shadows loom:

But fairy-like at dawn a secret spell
 Stole to my lips with dreamy plaintive note:
 "An ivy-leaf from Adonais' tomb."



Note

The Court of Song at Cologne is an annual gathering of poets and lovers of poetry from all parts of Germany. Valuable prizes are offered for the best songs and ballads. The victor in the chief poetical contest has the privilege of choosing the Flower-Queen, who is to preside over the Court of Song. Founded in 1899 by my friend, Dr. Johannes Fastenrath of Cologne, the institution has become a great power for good in the Fatherland, and is gradually spreading its influence to foreign lands. A Year-Book is published, in which the successful poetical compositions are offered to a wider public, together with almost innumerable greetings and appreciations from every part of the globe.

The following three sonnets were sent as greetings to the Court of Song, and are now reprinted from the various Year-Books:

—o—

To the Court of Song at Cologne, 1902

In days of yore when many a gallant knight
Fought but to win a smile from lady fair,
When highborn minstrels sang without a care,
Save only love, their tuneful heart's delight,

Stood there not then among the men of might
Full many a gentle soul that could not dare
To ride and joust amid the trumpet's blare,
Or chant the praise of love and lady bright?

I cannot enter; but with burning heart
I mark afar your tournament of song,
Dreaming the world is young and fresh once more:

Fight on and prosper, beautiful and strong!
For still the ideal is life's better part,
And hope springs ever from the world's heart-core.

—o—

The Court of Song at Cologne, 1903

A bower of roses, red and white and gold,
Flushed with the joy of life each twining spray,
Yet fragrant of the fair Provencal May
And of our own melodious days of old.

As if the centuries were backward rolled,
Stands sunbright Poesy in proud array:
And to her court, with harp and roundelay
Comes troubadour and minnesinger bold.

And sweet the songs they sing, how sweet the lays
Of love and truth and beauty ever young,
Of heaven-enraptured hope and knighthood's flower:

But sweeter than the sweetest ever sung,
Most beautiful of all, dear Friend, we praise
The Court of Song itself, Thy rose-starred bower.



To the Flower-Queen at Cologne, 1906

Rose-garlanded, in robes of azure hue,
Came lightsome May on silver-tinkling wing;
And at the sound the birds began to sing,
And earth to crown herself with joy anew.

Deep from her woodland dell, where violets blue,
And snowdrops bend to kiss the infant Spring,
Came Poesy with love's fond offering
To play and sing with May an hour or two.

And praising, now her song, and now his rose,
May joined in friendly strife with Poesy,
Amid the silence of the listening throng:

And then they laughed right gleefully, and Thee,
The Court of Songs' bright Flower-queen they chose,
The fairest rose, the very soul of song.



L'ENVOY

*Why should the poet sing, why strain the wings
Of Fancy, soaring still to purer heights;
Why not content himself with sparrow flights
Among the attractions of substantial things?*

*What use is there of all these whisperings,
Melodious though they be of past delights?
What profit in these dreamy sounds and sights,
In all the beauty that the poet brings?*

*Why should he sing? Truly, I cannot tell,
Save that the impulse comes unconsciously
And wafts the soul high into heaven's blue dome.*

*And if there be but few that listen: well,
The poet asks no more, as soaring free
The lark sings but to heaven and to its home.*

III.

Translations from the German.

To the Moon

Long years thou gavest to the earth,
 O moon, thy silver beams:
 Thy light hath power to charm and lull
 All earthly woe in dreams.

So like a mother, pitiful,
 Thou smilest on our gloom.
 Thy beams, that on our cradle slept,
 Shall sleep upon our tomb.

Thou art, indeed, a prudent friend,
 Faithful to young and old;
 Full many a secret hast thou known,
 But ne'er a one hast told.

Thou lookst on our delight and joy,
 Upon our pain and smart,
 And ever thy dear charming light
 Brings comfort to the heart.

When Snowdrifts Melt

Redeemed, thank God! old winter parts:
 The snowdrifts yield to gusty showers,
 The ancient hills with youthful hearts
 Now dream of sunny days and flowers.

Still far away the springtide's mirth;
 The air is chill, and grey and leaden;
 But gladly throbs the wakening earth
 With hope, no long delay can deaden.

The reign of death is past: and life
 Springs up in beauty, fair and tender;
 What of the winter's storm and strife?
 We feel but triumph's joy and splendor.

Redeemed, thank God! with fainting breath
 We bid adieu to sin and sorrow:
 Redeemed, and through the gate of death
 We hail the dawn of life's bright morrow.

Language of the Stars

The evening came: star after star
 Peered through the casements of the sky,
 And filled with limpid splendor far
 The silent realms of God on high.

Upon their lone eternal ways
 They wander through the darkblue deep,
 Wakening in hearts with brightsome rays
 Glad thoughts of Him whose court they keep.

O wondrous fair, ye golden signs
 And letters of God's heavenly scroll,
 O could we read the mystic lines,
 What high resolves for mind and soul!

But one grand truth, ah, see it shine
 In splendors of the stars above:
 A Being great, immense, divine
 Fills all creation with His love.

—o—
All Hallow's Summer

The air is balmy, mild and clear,
 Its deepblue waves in in ceaseless flow,
 And in a sunny golden glow
 Lingers the glory of the year.

And yet all leafless mourn the trees,
 And summer flowers are dead and gone;
 The woodland choristers are flown,
 And hushed their lilting melodies.

O sun, what boots thy fond deceit,
 Of summer in old winter's arms?
 Thy glow my heart no longer charms,
 Aweary of life's bitter-sweet.

Yet no, dear heart; the bright farewell
 Of summer is a heavenly ray:
 A symbol on this weary way
 Of joys no human heart can tell.

Snowy Landscape

All the earth with snow besprent:
 Hill and valley, wood and field
 Now to dreamful slumbers yield
 Under Heaven's all sheltering tent.

Numberless the snow-flakes swarm,
 Swirling, eddying, light and fine,
 Through each cranny, chink and chine,
 Wrapping all things soft and warm.

Polished as with master hand,
 Rounded every edge and scar,
 Nothing may earth's beauty mar,
 Brightly glitters all the land.

O, thou garment lily white,
 Clothing all the world anew,
 Symbol beautiful and true
 Of God's mercy ever bright.

—o—
The Sisters

Lovely sisters, joy and sorrow:
 Purple rosebud; and tomorrow
 Palest lily: ever blending:
 Each to each its beauty lending.

When with lilies pale they mingle,
 Roses deeper glow, than single:
 As our human life from sorrow
 Must its consecration borrow.

Where, when life and joy are parted,
 Shall the sister go, sad hearted?
 What of sorrow, when at even
 Joy ascends to home and heaven?

Ah, shall entrance be denied her?
 Shall she throne with joy beside her,
 Glorified, o'er death victorious
 In the wounds of Christ all glorious?

—o—

O Blessed Day!

O blessed day when in our weary quest,
The Lord of heaven we welcome as our guest.

Well may our little cares forgotten be,
In rendering Him our love and loyalty.

How sweet it is, far, far from life's dull drone
The woodland path to walk with God alone.

And then to scan from airy mountain height,
The world of God, all peaceful, fair and bright.

How beautiful the smiling vale below,
Its waving green tinged with a golden glow.

The happy grain, as conscious, bows its head
To my sweet guest, beneath the veil of bread.

And in the chapel by the embowered way
I bend my knee, in lowliness to pray.

The sun descends, the day is now at rest,
And He departs, my everblessed guest.

And full of gratitude, and burning love,
I praise the Lord of earth and heaven above.

Whilst high in air, catching the sun's last rays,
Two larks ascend in rippling song of praise.

—o—

Prayer

Dear Mother, fold me in thine arm,
 A weak and ailing child:
 O keep me safe, and hold me warm,
 Sweet Mother, meek and mild.

Enfold me where thy Child Divine,
 The fount of life, reposed:
 Where heavenly love's pure waters shine
 In human heart enclosed.

O let my weary spirit drink
 Now and eternally;
 And let me all oblivious sink
 Within love's burning sea.

O wonderful, mysterious way:
 For life's sake to expire,
 And flame-encircled still to pray
 For flames of living fire.

—o—

Warning

If one dear faithful heart should beat
 For thee in love, unselfish, pure:
 O thank the angel, as is meet,
 And pray the blessing may endure.

Thou dost not know how poor and lone
 The world, the loveless world, may be:
 Cheerless and harsh as frozen zone,
 And icy-cold as Polar Sea.

Poor little ship, intent to sail
 'Mong dreary ice-bergs' solitudes,
 Glittering like any fairy tale,
 Where ruthless death in silence broods.

And sad, who sinks within the rifts,
 Encased in ice by winter's breath,
 And now, unconscious, northward drifts
 Into the silent land of death.

—o—

At the Ranger

O Child within thy hands
 I lay my heart and soul,
 With all their stormy passions,
 With all their grief and dole.

O see the bitter floods
 Rise high in thunderous wave!
 Dark fears and wildest longings
 In weary conflict rave.

Still thou my heart's desires,
 Command the tempest wild,
 Dispel all fear and anguish,
 For Thine I am, sweet Child.

Thou holdest in Thy hands
 The ocean's mighty deep;
 One sign, and stormy billows
 Like children smile and sleep.

—o—
Reliques of Paradise

Of all the bliss of Paradise,
 Of all its beauty sweet and rare,
 Wrath's angel would but three things spare,
 The flowers, and stars and children's eyes.

The flowers of earth, dear types of love,
 In form and color, fresh and fair,
 Wafting upon the balmy air
 Their fragrant message from above.

And heaven's bright flowers, the clustering stars,
 As angel-smiles burst into bloom,
 On devious paths of earthly gloom
 Pouring their balm for wounds and scars.

But oh, the innocent children's eyes,
 Native of earth, yet heavenly bright,
 Fulfilled with grace and love and light,
 The sweetest flowers of Paradise.

—o—

Love of Children

How mysterious is a child!
God himself a child was born,
And when we were erring children,
Came to save us all forlorn:

How mysterious is a child!
Heart, my heart, be not affrighted,
Through the Christ-child thou with children art united.

O, how sacred is a child!
Spoke the Lord in Bible Story:
Guardian angels of these children
Gaze upon My Father's glory.

O, how sacred is a child!
Heart, my heart, though sere and blighted,
Through the Christ-child thou with children art united.

Full of honor is a child!
Dowered with light and life supernal;
They that are not like to children
Cannot enter joy eternal.

Full of honor is a child!
Sing, believing heart, delighted:
Through the Christ-child thou with children art united.

—o—

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Confidence

Let nothing make thee sad and fretful,
Or too regretful:

Be still!

What God ordaineth must be right:
Then find in it thine own delight,
My will!

Why shouldst thou fill today with sorrow
About tomorrow,

Fond heart!

God keepeth all with care most true:
Doubt not that He will give thee, too,
Thy part.

Only be steadfast; never waver,
Nor seek earth's favor:

The rest

God knoweth: and His will must be,
For all His creatures, so for thee
The best.



Sorrow's Balm

Beware the smiling paths of May
After a bitter parting hour:
Beware the merry sounds of day,
When darkened still by sorrow's power.

For every bird that sings to thee,
And every flower and every leaf,
And every breath but brings to thee
Fond echoes of thy plaint and grief.

For May is full of secret sound,
Of joyful song from flower to flower;
Of dreamy whisperings all around,
Of love to love in woodland bower.

A wondrous wealth of heart's delight,
As if no one were poor and cold;
Of youth and beauty, fresh and bright,
As if no life were drear and old;

As if each bush and bramble stood
Aglow with life's delirious wine:—
Then, keep apart from field and wood
That weary bleeding heart of thine!

O stay within thy chamber walls,
And spend o'er brightsome book the day,
Until thy sorrow fades and falls,
And like the twilight steals away.

Or kneel before the altar shrine
Praying: "Thy will, O Lord, be done!"
And lo, a gleam of light divine!
And grace descends, and peace is won.

No solace waits in leafy way;
Its mirth and joy new sorrows wake:
O shun the riotous bloom of May,
Or else thy grieving heart may break.



Resignation

The rosebud's beauty hath its day,
And then no more;
The nightingale sings one sweet lay,
And then no more:

And love's young dream, too, fades away,
As pallid death
Enshrouds the tender bloom of May,
And then no more:

But dread not thou the grief and smart
That haunt thee still.
The storm once rushes through the heart,
And then no more:

Yes, all the world, the wide, wide world,—
Why sorrow then?
The mighty world e'en hath its day,
And then no more.

—o—

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